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ABSTRACT

This book presents a constructivist approach to the development of rationality, morality, and identity in adolescence and early adulthood. It provides a review of post-Piagetian approaches to adolescent cognition, examining classic theories and current research in these three domains. The first chapter focuses discussion on adolescent psychological development. It suggests that psychological development continues beyond childhood and that a developmental perspective on adolescence may be a particularly useful one. The next nine chapters consider three aspects of psychological development. Specifically, three chapters each are devoted to the development of rationality, morality, and identity. Although not a comprehensive account of adolescent psychology, a great deal of the developmental literature on adolescence is addressed. In particular, chapters 2 through 4 discuss what is generally referred to as cognitive development--progress towards advanced forms of knowledge and reasoning. Chapters 5 through 10 extend the discussion to encompass developmental changes in our moral conceptions and our understanding of ourselves. Chapter 11 argues that adolescent psychological development is best understood from a metatheoretical perspective called "pluralist rational constructivism." Chapter 12 concludes with a discussion of educational policy issues and proposes that adolescent psychological development is best promoted in educational and other contexts that recognize the rationality of adolescents and the role of liberty in adolescent development. (Contains 258 references and author and subject indexes.) (GCP)

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